Council Highlights: May 2003

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COUNCIL HIGHLIGHTS is intended to provide quick updates on issues of interest to members and affiliates of the Council of Ontario Universities (COU). It is produced regularly throughout the academic year.

This issue covers the months of March and April 2003.

New funding measures will enable Ontario universities to deliver access and quality to double cohort students

On March 27, 2003, the Ontario government announced higher education measures that, when added to the significant investments in Ontario universities over the past three years, will provide universities with the funds necessary to meet the access and quality challenges of the double cohort.

Among the new measures, SuperBuild, the government's capital investment program for the postsecondary sector, will provide funding to create over 21,000 more student places for colleges and universities, for a total of over 135,000 new student spaces. The government's multi-year operating grant commitment to the postsecondary sector will increase by an additional $75 million. Moreover, to ensure that the double cohort students receive the quality university education they deserve, a Quality Assurance Fund will be created. For universities, this will result in additional funding of $75 million in 2003-2004 and will rise each year to reach $200 million by 2006-2007.

Together, these measures will improve the quality of the physical facilities for the double cohort, enable universities to hire more professors and staff and to acquire more learning resources, and will enhance the research and innovation capacity of the province.

Complete details on the 2003 budget measures applicable to higher education can be found on the Ontario Ministry of Finance web site (www.gov.on.ca/FIN/english/budeng.htm).

COU Task Force on double cohort releases paper

In fall 2002, the COU Double Cohort Logistics Task Force, chaired by Dr. Gilles Patry, Rector of the University of Ottawa, was established to identify the level of preparedness at the local level and to raise awareness of the admissions and related issues that universities will face in dealing with the arrival of the double cohort. The Task Force's endeavours, built on earlier reviews commissioned by the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities as well as those conducted by COU affiliates, helped to raise further awareness among institutions to ensure that they would be as prepared as possible for the large influx of first-year students to their respective campuses.

The Task Force's paper, entitled *Final Report of the Double Cohort Logistics Task Force*, found that institutions indicated a high level of preparedness to deal with the substantial increase in admissions expected in 2003-2004. The report also noted that there would be significant continuing pressures to refurbish physical facilities and recruit additional faculty in a very competitive market as the double cohort students move through their undergraduate years and, subsequently, as some go on to graduate school. For a copy of the report, visit the COU web site (www.cou.on.ca).

Success stories on federally funded university research compiled

The Ontario Council on University Research, in association with COU, has recently published *A*

Sampling of Success Stories of Federal Investment in University Research. The publication is a compilation of success stories illustrating a wide range of research that is being undertaken at Ontario universities and that is being supported by the federal government – through the Canada Foundation for Innovation, Canadian Institutes of Health Research, Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council, Networks of Centres of Excellence, and Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council. Federal grants have enabled Ontario universities to conduct leading-edge research that is contributing not only to the competitiveness of Canada's and Ontario's economy but also to the quality of life of all citizens. *Success Stories* provides brief accounts of research and innovation for each university across the disciplines.

The Government of Ontario, through the Ontario Innovation Trust and the Ontario Research and Development Challenge Fund, has also provided matching funding for many research projects described in this publication.

The publication will be made available on COU's web site (www.cou.on.ca) by June.

2003 University Applicant Survey now underway

COU, in concert with Acumen Research Group Inc, is undertaking its second annual joint survey of all first-year undergraduate applicants to Ontario universities. The primary purpose of the survey is to understand the factors that influence applicants' decision-making processes in choosing an institution, so that institutions can better serve the information and service needs of incoming students. The survey will also provide an analysis of the applicants that will help inform COU's advocacy and research efforts. A steering committee, with representation from a number of Ontario universities and participation from Acumen, provides advice on the content and administration of the survey, which builds on the work of the 2002 University Applicant Survey. (A summary report of the 2002 survey is available at the COU web site, www.cou.on.ca.)

Survey results will be released to the universities by the end of summer. A summary report will follow later in the year.

Second annual awards for teaching with technology

The Office for Partnerships for Advanced Skills (OPAS) has issued a call for submissions for the 2003 OPAS Awards for Excellence in Teaching with Technology. The two awards, which were established in 2002, recognize faculty at Ontario universities who have demonstrated outstanding innovation and achievement in using technology to enhance their teaching. The first, sponsored by CGI Group Inc., will honour a university application. The second, sponsored by IBM Canada, will be presented for a course or program designed specifically for people in the workplace. Both awards are valued at $7,500 and will be presented at a special awards luncheon in Toronto in October 2003. For more information on the awards including how to apply, visit the OPAS web site (www.opas-partnerships.com).

Chair of OPAS board appointed business dean at Western

Carol Stephenson, newly appointed Chair of the OPAS Board of Directors, has been appointed Dean of the Richard Ivey School of Business at the University of Western Ontario. Ms. Stephenson is a widely respected leader in the Canadian telecommunications industry whose expertise spans marketing, operations, strategic planning, technology development and financial management. She served as President and CEO of Lucent Technologies Canada and, before that, as President and COO (The Americas) of BCE Media Inc., a leading-edge satellite communications services company. She has been a member of the OPAS board since 2000.

Appointments and departures

- Bonnie M. Patterson has accepted an invitation from the Board of Governors to serve a second term as President and Vice-Chancellor of Trent University until 2009.

- After 18 years with Nipissing University, President David Marshall will be leaving the university at the end of the academic year to assume the position of President of Mount Royal College in Calgary. Dr. Marshall has served as President and Vice-Chancellor of Nipissing University since 1990 (and President of Nipissing University College from 1990 to1992). Prior to that, he was Dean of the Faculty of Education.

- In March 2003, after 14 years of leadership, Greg Marcotte, Executive Director of the Ontario Universities' Application Centre, left the Centre to pursue a consulting career. In the past two years, Greg orchestrated a major move and introduced a new computer system to help ready the Centre to address growing demands – most notably, ever increasing numbers of applications.

Update on secondary school issues

The Application Centre has shared marks data from university applicants that compares results from the new Grade 12 U courses with those from OACs, allowing an analysis of the grades that students in each cohort will report in their final year of secondary school studies. The latest data confirm the evidence, which was apparent in the results from earlier years, that grades remain remarkably consistent between courses from the former curriculum and their equivalents in the new one. In almost all cases, the difference in grades is less than 1%. On the basis of the information provided by the Ministry of Education, grades from each program of studies should be treated as equivalent.

With the introduction of the Grade 12 program of courses, the 2002-2003 school year completes the implementation of the Ontario Secondary School (OSS) curriculum. The Ministry of Education has announced an action plan in *Sustaining Quality Curriculum* at the secondary school level. The review process begins this year with a pilot study of courses in Social Studies, History, Geography, and Canadian and World Studies. One objective of the pilot study is to refine the instrument that will be used to evaluate courses in all disciplines. The Ministry has established a six-year schedule to complete a review of the entire secondary curriculum. COU has been participating in discussions about this initiative and is pleased that university subject specialists will be included in the process of evaluating U and U/C courses as well as validating revised versions of these courses.

Latest issue of *For the Record*

The latest edition of the COU newsletter *For the Record* was recently published. The March 2003 issue (Vol. 6, No. 1) leads off with a report on the successful completion of the first phase of the admission cycle for Ontario secondary school students. (As of January 15, 2003, a remarkable number of 101,668 students – representing a 46.7% increase in applicants compared to last year's cycle – submitted applications for fall 2003 admission to universities in our province.) This issue also highlights the establishment of an endowment fund to recognize women's health scholars; a summary of the findings of a study on *Public Perceptions of Quality in Ontario Universities*; and the second annual presentation of the David C. Smith award. A special supplement features not only the members of Council for the academic year 2002-2003, but also the many committees, special groups and affiliates that significantly contribute to the work of COU. For a copy, visit www.cou.on.ca.

University of Ontario Institute of Technology

At its April 25th meeting, Council approved the motion to admit the University of Ontario Institute of Technology (UOIT) as a full member, effective July 1, 2003. Membership in COU brings with it membership in 28 affiliate organizations representing functions within Ontario universities that meet on a regular basis.

Ontario Committee on Student Affairs reports on activities

Also at its April 25th meeting, the Ontario Committee on Student Affairs, chaired and represented by Dr. Bob Crawford, Dean of Student Affairs at Queen's University, reported on the committee's activities, many of which focused on the double cohort. Throughout the year, Council regularly invites chairs of affiliate groups to provide updates on their issues and activities.